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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi **David Chananya Pinto** shlit'a  
Son of the tzaddik Rabbi **Moshe Ahron Pinto** zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi **Chaim Pinto** zy"ta

## MASKIL LE'DAVID

### Who May Ascend the Mountain of Hashem?

**"Against the great men of the Children of Israel, He did not stretch out His hand – they gazed at Hashem, yet they ate and drank" (Shemot 24:11).**

On the day of the Giving of the Torah, Nadav, Avihu, and the seventy Elders reached an exceptionally high level, enabling them to gaze at Hashem. The Torah adds that even though Nadav and Avihu were gazing at Hashem's Shechina, they continued eating and drinking and were not overcome with fear and awe. Rashi quotes the Midrash Tanchuma: "They looked at Him with a coarse heart, while eating and drinking."

This gives rise to a perplexing question: Any thinking person would clearly be paralyzed with awe and not capable of putting anything into his mouth in front of a human king, how much more so in front of Hashem. How is it possible that these holy people were not overcome? One can answer that this was not standard eating, rather the kind of eating that can be compared to the eating of a sacrifice, as it says (*Yechezkel* 41:22), "This is the Table that is before Hashem." The food the Kohanim ate in the Beit Hamikdash was considered like a sacrifice, and their bodies were considered like the Mizbeach on which a *korban* is offered. Due to this holy form of eating, their table was called "the Table that is before Hashem." The claim against Nadav, Avihu, and the Elders was that they gazed at Hashem's presence. Even though Moshe Rabbeinu, on his extremely elevated level, merited speaking face to face with Hashem, he never dared to look at Him directly, rather he would lower his eyes. Moshe was aware of the verse (*Shemot* 33:20), "... no human can see My face and live," so he was particular to lower his eyes and not look directly at Hashem. Even when Moshe merited seeing the Shechina, he only saw Hashem's back wrapped in a tallit. Similarly, when the Prophets merited a prophetic revelation they would immediately fall

on their faces, and this was so as not to gaze at the Shechina. In light of the above, the claim against Nadav and Avihu was for daring to gaze at the appearance of the Shechina, not for continuing to eat and drink. Even though they reached the high level of seeing Hashem, they should have revered the awesomeness of Heaven and not exploited this merit.

The story is told about the daughter of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, zy"ta, who one day entered her father's study in order to get something. Surprisingly, she saw another person in the room, whose identity was not familiar to her. When Rabbi Chaim noticed his daughter's presence, he leaped from his seat and exclaimed, "My daughter, why did you enter my study without receiving permission? The figure you saw was Eliyahu Hanavi, of blessed memory. You beheld his countenance even though you are not worthy of such a privilege. Consequently, a harsh decree has been issued upon you; the eyes that beheld him will turn blind after your marriage, or alternatively, you may depart from the world, *chas v'shalom*."

The holy Rabbi Chaim refused to hear *shidduch* suggestions for his daughter, for he feared bringing about her bitter fate. One night, Rabbi Khalifa Malka, zy"ta, appeared to the holy Rabbi Chaim in a dream, asking him to wed his daughter to Rabbi Khalifa's grandson. Rabbi Chaim told him that he is afraid to marry off his daughter since it was decreed upon her to become blind in both eyes after her marriage, for she beheld Eliyahu Hanavi. Rabbi Khalifa answered that his grandson will accept the decree from Heaven, come what may, since he deems it a privilege to marry Rabbi Chaim's exceptionally righteous daughter. Rabbi Khalifa continued: "The couple should marry and Rabbi Chaim should pray for mercy." Indeed, they were wed and ultimately, the terrible decree was annulled. The merits of their holy ancestors stood in their stead and Rabbi Chaim's daughter retained her sight. They both lived long lives and enjoyed generations of righteous descendants.

When I heard this story I was surprised. If she merited seeing Eliyahu Hanavi and remaining alive, does that not indicate she was deserving of the privilege?

cont. p. 2.>>>

24 Shevat 5785

22 February 2025

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**Mishpatim**

**Shabbat Mevarchin**



## Hilula

**24 Shevat**  
Rabbi Shaul Halevi  
Mortirah, Av Beit Din  
of Amsterdam

**25 Shevat**  
Rabbi Yisrael Lifkin  
of Salant

**26 Shevat**  
Rabbi Yosef Bardugo,  
author of *Shufrah d'Yosef*

**27 Shevat**  
Rabbi Chaim Bardugo

**28 Shevat**  
Rabbi Vidal Angel,  
Ra'avad Yerushalayim

**29 Shevat**  
Rabbi Natan Tzvi Finkel,  
the Saba of Slabodka

**30 Shevat**  
Rabbi Meir, the Maharam  
of Padova



## FROM THE TREASURY



Based on the teachings of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

### Levels in the Attribute of Emunah

**“The appearance of the glory of Hashem was like a consuming fire on the mountain-top before the eyes of the Children of Israel” (Shemot 24:17).**

When Hashem wished to give Bnei Yisrael the holy Torah, He commanded Moshe to ascend the mountain, and Hashem's appearance was revealed to Moshe inside a fire.

The question is, we do not find anywhere any kind of reaction to Moshe Rabbeinu's presence inside this fire. Yet Moshe Rabbeinu, a human being, survived for forty days and forty nights inside this fire without anything happening to him.

Conversely, when Avraham Avinu was thrown into the burning furnace in Ur Kasdim, the entire world expressed their amazement when Avraham emerged from the fire unscathed. What is the difference between these two incidents?

One can answer that there is an essential difference between the fire of Torah and an earthly fire. An earthly fire burns and consumes, whereas the fire of Torah actually bestows life.

Chazal say (*Berachot* 63b): “Torah only endures in one who sacrifices himself for it.” This means that if a person subdues himself to the Torah and considers it his priority, then the fire of Torah will burn in his bones and give him life.

On the other hand, the earthly fire of lust, which possesses the physical property of burning, has the power to remove a person from both this world and the Next.



## WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

### Children as Guarantors

I am acquainted with a wealthy Jew who taught me about the accountability that rests on children's shoulders, as a result of their parents' deeds.

This wealthy Jew contributed generously to the needy and also immersed himself in Torah study. He was the embodiment of what Chazal call “Torah and greatness in one place.” He married off several of his children honorably and also merited grandchildren. Suddenly, the wheel of fortune turned in his disfavor. He lost all his riches and became a pauper.

He still had children at home whom he had not yet married off, as well as grandchildren who were used to enjoying his wealth. But now that he had lost all his money, his entire family had to get used to living in poverty.

“Why did this happen to me?” He bewailed his bitter lot. “I was always meticulous about giving *tzedakah* and doing favors for my fellow man, even above what I took for myself and my family. At the same time, I kept up a steady schedule of learning Torah. Why do I deserve this difficult test?”

I honestly did not know what to answer him. Do we know Heavenly

calculations? But one thing I did know. There was surely a reason why he lost his assets. It was his moral obligation to vindicate Hashem's will and accept it with unconditional love. Who knows? Maybe this poverty came instead of more difficult tribulations which had been decreed upon his family? Maybe it came to atone for sins committed in a previous lifetime? Upon pondering the trials of poverty which his children and grandchildren faced, I realized it was because children are a person's guarantors.

When a person sins in any area, the Attribute of Justice demands that his children die, for they are a person's guarantors. But Hashem is All-Merciful and therefore spares this anguish. Instead, he takes a person's property. The children are left penniless and thereby fall into the category of “A poor person is considered as dead.”

**This conduct is a great kindness from Hashem, since due to their sins, many people would really deserve to be punished by seeing their children die. But in His great kindness, Hashem instead challenges them with the hardship of poverty, and through this his children remain alive.**

*cont. from p. 1 >>>*

If so, why was her father concerned? After thinking about the matter, I came to the conclusion that Rabbi Chaim's concern was that his daughter should not have looked at this particular study partner, since she knew her father was learning alone and no one had entered the house. Since she did not control herself and gazed at something she should not have, she was taken to task for this, for one must take care not to gaze at holy and sublime things, so as not to be harmed, *chalila*.

There is no natural way for a person to ascend the mountain of Hashem and remain there, since it is a place where the Shechina rests and reserved for Hashem alone. But, if a person is careful with Heaven's honor and takes care not to look at Hashem's presence, he merits a special growth and elevation as a result of that caution. The example is Moshe Rabbeinu who was careful with Heaven's honor, and he therefore merited an invitation from Hashem to ascend His mountain.



## WORDS OF THE SAGES

### Are You Familiar with the Thief?

**“If a man shall steal”** (*Shemot* 21:37).

The Gaon Rabbi Ben Zion Mutzafi quotes the prophecy of Ovadiah the Navi: “We have heard tidings from Hashem and a messenger has been sent among the nations .... If thieves had come upon you, of plunderers of the night — how utterly are you cut off! — would they not steal [only] until they had enough for themselves?”

In his *sefer Doresh Tzion*, Rabbi Mutzafi asks: “Who are these ‘thieves’?”

It seems we know them well. **A person leaves his house for the *beit kneset*, and on the way he meets a friend and stops to exchange a few words. When he finishes the conversation, he hurries to the *beit kneset* and just about manages to recite the Shemone Esrei prayer with the congregation.**

He doesn’t understand what the problem is and excuses himself: I left my house on time, why am I guilty that I met a friend? It would have been impolite to brush him off with a quick hello, so I stopped to talk for a few minutes. Is it my fault my friend didn’t let me go?

So we present him with this question: If you were on the way to work, would you also stop and chat? Why, when it comes to spiritual matters, do you give yourself leeway? Would you dare come late to work because a friend stopped to talk? **You would be embarrassed to excuse yourself with these kind of justifications. So why, when it comes to the honor of Heaven, do you feel comfortable offering these excuses?**

A person finishes reciting the Shemone Esrei prayer, and while saying Uva l’Tzion he removes his tefillin. When the congregation is up to Ein k’Elokeinu, he has already removed his *tallit*, and before they have a chance to recite Aleinu l’shabe’ach, he has left the *beit kneset*. What can he do? He is in a rush! But what happens on the way home? He meets a friend, stops to chat with him, and this little talk ends up taking a quarter of an hour. Suddenly he is not in a rush; it is awkward for him to cut the conversation short.

In contrast we ask him: “If thieves had come upon you, of plunderers of the night.” If you were standing in the street talking to your friend, and suddenly thieves would come and snatch your wallet, would you continue talking to your friend because “it’s not polite”?! You would immediately stop the conversation and chase after the thieves, shouting loudly, “Thieves! Thieves!” Here there is no room for embarrassment and no room for considerations of “unpleasant.” You need to retrieve your stolen money.

Likewise, if thieves break into your home in the middle of the night and steal expensive jewelry, you would immediately jump out of bed and run after them in the street, barefoot and wearing pajamas. You wouldn’t waste a second to change into clothes because every second makes a difference. Now is not the time to weigh up any feelings of “unpleasant.” So certainly, when it comes to spiritual matters, we should behave at least as we would when faced with material concerns!



## PARSHAH PEARLS

### Inspiring Reflections

### Selling Himself Should Be Viewed as a Punishment

**“Then his master shall bring him to the court and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore through his ear with the awl, and he shall serve him forever”** (*Shemot* 21:6).

The Gemara asks, “Why is the ear pierced rather than any other limb? Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai said, ‘This ear heard at Har Sinai, “You shall not steal.” Since it went and stole, it should be pierced”’ (Rashi).

Based on this reason, his ear should be pierced immediately as a punishment for the theft. Why is it only pierced on account of him saying that he does not wish to go free after working for his master for the requisite six years?

The Maharil Diskin resolves this question: The reason why this thief is sold as a servant, is because he does not have the means to pay back what he stole. Since being sold is considered a punishment, the Torah did not want to punish him twice. But once he says that he doesn’t want to leave, he shows that becoming a servant was not a punishment for him. This is why his ear is now pierced as a punishment for his theft.

### Lying for the Sake of Saving a Life

**“Distance yourself from a false word”** (*Shemot* 23:7).

Chazal established certain cases where it is permissible to deviate from the truth, for example for the sake of peace and other similar situations.

As a demonstration of this Chazal, Maran Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, *zt”l*, told over the following story, which he heard from his father:

During war-time, anyone found without a passport was in grave danger and would be shot. It once happened that two *bachurim* set out; one possessed a passport and the other one did not. Suddenly, they noticed a soldier approaching them. The *bachur* with the passport told his friend that he should remain where he is, while he himself will run away. As soon as he took off, the soldier began chasing after him until he caught up with him. The soldier demanded to see his passport, which he willingly presented. The soldier then asked the *bachur* why he ran away. He replied that he has a digestive disorder and his doctor had ordered him to run for two hours every day. The soldier then asked: “You saw I was chasing after you, why did you not stop?”

The *bachur* replied:

“I thought you had the same sickness...”

# A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

## Middot Are the Core of Everything



Harav Eliezer Turk, *shlita*, quotes Maran Hagaon Rabbi Elyashiv, *zt"l*, who says that the topic of *eved Ivri* (a Jewish bondsman) is incredible. Throughout the world, where the law is defined according to non-Jewish rulings, harsh punishment is meted out to thieves. Sometimes the presence of only one witness is enough to pronounce a thief guilty, and this witness could even be a relative or someone prejudiced. In addition, just an assumption of guilt is sometimes enough to punish. These severe rulings stem from a simple and rational supposition that if not for these punishments, "A person would swallow his fellow alive." However, as far as the Jewish people are concerned, the Torah tells us that a thief is only obligated to pay if there are two witnesses. And even in this case, if he admits the theft before the witnesses arrive, he is exempt from the fine. In addition, even if he was found guilty, if he doesn't have the means to pay, he is sold as a servant. And then, not only is he exempt from finding the money to pay, he is now afforded a life of comfort! His master is obligated to feed him with good food, just as the master is accustomed to eating, and the slave must be dressed in the same quality clothes that the master wears. The thief has no financial worries of how to support himself and his family. One who contemplates this will certainly wonder: If this is the situation, what would deter a thief from stealing? How will order be retained in the world? People will steal in order to be sold for the theft, for this will free them of the burden of *parnassah* while living a comfortable life on their master's account. But Harav Elyashiv proves something wondrous from this *parsha*. **The Torah is teaching us an important and fundamental point: We should not establish gallows and other forms of corporal punishment as a threat to deter thieves from committing crimes, for this is not what will stop them. Rather, by helping them change their essence they will cease transgressing.**

Harav Elyashiv teaches that the method for perfecting society is the opposite of the generally accepted view. The pleasant way in which people are treated, and the honor and sensitivity they are accorded, is what will stop them from stealing. This, together with being influenced by their master's good qualities, and seeing how he follows the Torah path and has faith in Hashem, is what will ensure that order reigns in the world. This is what will bring a dearth of stealing! This is the Torah outlook on this topic! The topic of the *eved Ivri* is in fact the classic example of good *middot*!

Hagaon Rabbi Michal Zilber, *shlita*, Rosh Yeshiva of Zvhil, testifies about the conduct of his master, Maran Hagaon Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, *zt"l*. He witnessed the special treatment which Harav Abramsky accorded his household help.

Every so often he would call her over in the middle of her work and tell her to rest for a bit. He also told her that in general, it would make him happy if she would work slowly and with ease, rather than exhausting herself by working quickly. This was his wish, despite the fact that working slowly meant he had to pay her more, since she was paid by the hour.

This considerate conduct with which Harav Abramsky treated his domestic help, certainly enhanced her view of a Torah way of life, as she witnessed its pleasant ways. This approach of treating each person with equal honor, no matter their status, is what brings peace and harmony to the world.

Maran Hagaon Rabbi Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz, *zt"l*, in his *sefer Imrei Da'at*, imparts a lesson culled from his years of experience in the area of *chinuch*:

"I am telling you, from established evidence and tens of years of experience, that the true foundation of a person, how he determines his future and sets himself up for life, is not ascertained by his talents or other things, rather

it is only his *middot* that determine how he will live his life! If a person has good *middot*, then he has a promising future. And if *chas v'shalom* his *middot* are not up to par, he is far from achieving anything. He might give a different impression, but in reality he is very far from any true qualities."

Rabbi Michel continues with an amazing statement: "This is what we heard about and saw in all the *gedolim* of our time, and in all the famous leaders of the previous generation too. Their core foundation was good *middot*!"

The powerful and piercing words of the Vilna Gaon, brought in the introduction to the *sefer Even Shleima*, are worth quoting: "All *avodat Hashem* is dependent on perfecting one's *middot*, which are like clothes for Torah and mitzvot. Conversely, all sins are rooted in (bad) *middot* and the main reason for a person's existence is so he should continually strengthen himself in breaking his *middot*, and if he does not do so, why does he deserve to live?!"

The gaon and tzaddik, Rabbi Dov Yaffe, *zt"l*, Mashgiach of Kfar Chassidim, used to frequently urge his students with a wonderful statement: "A person can choose to live in the *gan eden* of good *middot*, yet in place of this he chooses to live in the *gehinom* of bad *middot*. Tell me, is this not a shame?!"

The implication of this idea is that a person who displays good *middot* is the first one to gain; it is as if he is living in Gan Eden: he experiences no anger, grudges, sadness, worries, jealousy or hatred. But in place of this, he chooses to corrupt his *middot*, on the chance of bettering things for himself or to gain some small benefit. But in actual fact, he is the first one and the main one who stands to lose out from his behavior; his life is like a life of *gehinom*, full of anger and loaded with hatred and resentment.

"Tell me, is this not a shame?!" The Mashgiach's piercing question continues to echo...



**"Contemplate and see that Hashem is good"**

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